

J·DSANA

Le Journal de l'Association des Producteurs d'Ovins Laitiers d'Amérique du Nord

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR DSANA PRESIDENT, MIKE HISTON

Plan to swap stories and find opportunities at annual symposium



PHOTO COURTESY OF HAVERTON HILL

Hello everyone! It seems like only yesterday that all of us on the East Coast were spending our days digging out from snow, ice and cold. Most of the time we had no electricity or Internet connection, which is an interesting way to run a dairy. Maybe we should have our Amish dairymen neighbors show us how to work without power.

And now we're having good weather, and the Pacific Northwest and California are in drought status. DSANA member Terry Felda says it's 105 degrees at her place in Lexington, Ore., as we write this. Crazy times.

Some of you might have noticed we didn't send out a newsletter this spring. Let's just say this: I'll tell you the story of legislation and chicken guts this fall over a bottle of Milwaukee's Best. The newsletter just slipped by Terry and me.

But we're trying to make up for it this time around. The symposium schedule is included. If you haven't heard, it's back in Wisconsin this November. Dave Thomas and Brenda Jensen are the co-chairs. They've put together a great lineup of sessions including a cheesemaking day at the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research.

Also included is an article about unconventional business plans. We are certainly in an unconventional industry, and the information and suggestions make sense to me. I think it is a good tool for everyone to have.

Last year, the board voted to join the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI). If you were in Chehalis last year, you heard a presentation by Clint Krebs, the former president of ASI. I would like to follow through with that vote because we are so small an industry that it is practically impossible to get grants or other special consideration. I believe that partnering with ASI can help with that.

We also voted to move ahead with bioTrack, an Ontario, Canada-based livestock identification system. It would help to have grant money for this project, but being able to start a national database of dairy sheep genetics could be a major milestone for this industry.

There's so much more to talk about, including the fact that we have elections for new board members this fall. Wisconsin is going to be great and I'm sure the weather is going to cooperate as well. Anyone remember the blizzards that swept through right after last year's conference?

I'm looking forward to seeing you in Wisconsin and hoisting just a few along with some real Wisconsin fried cheese curds. I've heard about them. Gotta try them.

Hope to see you there.



Mike Histon,
DSANA Board
of Directors President



Dairy Sheep Association of North America

Mark your calendars: DSANA Symposium comes to Wisconsin



Plan to visit The Dairy State for the 21st annual Dairy Sheep Association of North America Symposium, Nov. 5-7.

THE DSANA BOARD IS EXCITED to share a preview of our upcoming symposium. For anyone who has attended, you'll agree the event is one of our favorite times of the year, filled with education, networking and exciting farm tours.

This year, our symposium will take place in The Dairy State – Wisconsin! America's Dairyland is famous for its dairy cattle industry, so it's only fitting that we bring information about our association to the state while learning about its expertise and infrastructure for dairy production and cheesemaking. This year's event is scheduled Nov. 5-7, 2015 at the Pyle Center, (702 Langdon Street) in Madison, Wis.

The three-day event includes presentations, a trade show, creamery tours and our annual meeting. A cheesemaking workshop is scheduled the day before the symposium at the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research. Presentations are designed to be informational to those with any level of experience in dairy sheep production. Among the topics are udder health, special milking considerations for small ruminants, marketing, raising lambs, principals of dairy nutrition and flock health.

The tours include two facilities in the heart of America's Dairyland. Cedar Grove Cheese in Plain, Wis., buys milk from 30 Wisconsin farms to make 4 million pounds of cheese per year. A highlight of the facility is a working ecosystem that processes cheese production wastewater into clean water. Hidden Springs Creamery of Westby, Wis. is a farmstead sheep dairy founded in 2006. Owned by Dean and Brenda Jensen, the 450-sheep dairy is managed to be environmentally and financially sustainable.

The cheesemaking workshop will cover the basics of making a variety of cheeses. The workshop will be at the Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research, located within Babcock Dairy Plant, a licensed and fully operating dairy processing facility at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The workshop will be taught by Brenda Jensen and CDR staff. Participants also will have the opportunity to speak with cheese research scientist Mark Johnson.

For a complete schedule, lodging and transportation information and to register, visit www.dsana.org. Those who register after Oct. 16 will be charged a \$25 late fee.

PHOTOS COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN



The Pyle Center, University of Wisconsin

PHOTOS COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN



Babcock Hall, University of Wisconsin

PHOTOS COURTESY CEDAR GROVE CHEESE



Living Machine, Cedar Grove Cheese



PHOTO COURTESY HIDDEN SPRINGS CREAMERY

Sheep barn, Hidden Springs Creamery

Lamb Nutrition
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VS.



Ewe's milk vs. milk replacer

Cornell University researchers compare the options.

IT'S TIME TO LOOK AHEAD to next year's spring lambing season. Should you feed milk replacer or ewe's milk to the 2016 lamb crop?

New research from Cornell University provides insight to this query. The study, conducted by Ann DiPastina in conjunction with Dr. Debbie Cherney, looked to answer two questions: Does the composition of ewe's milk change through lactation? And, are the growth rates different between lambs on milk replacer compared to those on ewe's milk?

For the study, twin lambs were separated into two groups: lambs fed milk replacer and lambs left with the ewes. Milk replacer-fed lambs were housed in 0.9 x 0.9 meter pens in pairs and offered free-choice access to LAND O LAKES® UltraFresh® Optimum lamb milk replacer. Ewe-fed lambs were housed with their dams in 1.5 x 1.5 meter pens with access to a 0.6 x 1.5 meter creep area.

Read on to discover the team's findings.

Question 1:

Does the composition of ewe's milk change through lactation?

The first phase of the research focused on the ewes and their milk production. The objective was to measure potential changes in milk composition.

"Consistency is a number one rule in lamb care," says Tom Earleywine, Ph.D., director of nutritional services for LAND O LAKES® Animal Milk Products. "Consistency in housing, nutrition and management can

prevent stress and keep lambs on the path to productivity."

With this concept in mind, the Cornell team collected 35-milliliter milk samples from each ewe six times per day at lactation days 18, 19 and 20 (Period 1) as well as days 38, 39 and 40 (Period 2). Samples were analyzed for percent fat, protein and lactose by time of day and stage of lactation.

"There was a significant difference in average protein and lactose percent between the two periods; Period 2 was higher in protein and lower in lactose than Period 1 milk," says DiPastina, adding that averages over time were equal to milk replacer components.

Differences were also noticed based on the time of day the milk was collected.

By volume, ewes in early lactation produced the highest milk volume at 4:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. with a drop between noon and 8:00 p.m. Production then increased again near midnight. A similar trend was found as lactation progressed but with a second peak occurring earlier in the evening at 8:00 p.m.

"While these nutrient levels are fixed in milk replacers, composition varies in ewes' milk due to many environmental factors, litter size, nutrition and breed," DiPastina found. "Fat percent has been shown to drop rapidly in the first three weeks of lactation with a gradual increase until 250 days in milk."

"This variation in milk components and volume may impact lamb growth rates due to inconsistency in nutrition provided to the lamb," says Earleywine.

Milk replacer vs. ewe's milk • continued on p. 4

Lamb Nutrition

Column sponsored by

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Milk replacer vs. ewe's milk • continued from p. 3

Question 2:

Are growth rates different between lambs fed milk replacer and ewe's milk?

Realizing the differences in consistency, the researchers next looked into growth rates between lambs fed milk replacer and ewe's milk.

As outlined earlier, lambs were randomly split into two groups: those offered free-choice UltraFresh[®] Optimum lamb milk replacer and those who remained with the ewe. Lambs were weighed daily at 8:00 a.m. until 30 days of age; creep feed and milk replacer intake were measured three times daily.

The results were on par with views on consistency, with average growth rates higher for lambs fed milk replacer (0.66 pound/day as compared to 0.62 pound/day for lambs reared on the ewe). The consistency in nutrition also helped fallouts match their counterparts.

"In spite of starting out smaller, on average, than the ewe-fed lambs at birth, the milk replacer fed lambs tended to reach the same final weight at day 30," says DiPastina.

Creep feed consumption between the two groups was nearly uniform; thus, the researchers point to consistency in nutrition as a driver in the increased growth rates.

"A potential reason for the elevated growth rates in milk replacer-fed lambs could be the consistency of energy intake," says DiPastina. "Results indicated that milk yield varies significantly throughout the day. Lambs' intake levels may have therefore fluctuated throughout the day as well."

To provide consistent nutrition from day one through weaning, Earleywine recommends feeding lambs a lamb-specific milk replacer, such as LAND O LAKES[®] UltraFresh[®] Optimum lamb milk replacer.

"UltraFresh[®] is formulated to match the components produced by the ewe at a consistent level each day," he says. "By feeding this milk replacer, we can better ensure the lambs receive the nutrients they require - each feeding."

To learn more about lamb nutrition and management, contact Dr. Tom Earleywine at (800) 618-6455 or TJEarleywine@landolakes.com, visit www.lolmilkreplacer.com or like [We Care for Lambs on Facebook](#).

Land O'Lakes Animal Milk Products
is a proud supporter of the upcoming
DSANA Symposium. Be sure to visit our
booth and learn more about lamb
nutrition and management.

www.lolmilkreplacer.com

 We Care for Lambs

Recommended lamb feeding program

- **Day One:** Feed LAND O LAKES[®] Colostrum Replacement for Kid Goats and Lambs.
- **Day 2-30:** Feed LAND O LAKES[®] Ultra Fresh[®] Optimum lamb milk replacer and provide ample water supply to lambs at all times.
- **Day 14:** Start lambs on high-quality starter feed. Do not feed hay the first 3 weeks.
- **Day 30:** Lambs are ready to wean when they weigh 25 pounds and are eating ample quantities of starter feed. They should have consumed at least 20-25 pounds of Ultra Fresh[®] Optimum lamb milk replacer powder. This usually occurs around 30 days of age.



The business side of raising dairy sheep



Useful tips and learnings from when I created a business plan.

By Terry Felda
DSANA Newsletter Director

I WAS GETTING READY TO WRITE a dairy management article that one would expect to see in a newsletter... tips on selecting milking equipment, fall pasture management or dealing with seasonal changes in production. However, while I was reading, I came across an article advising me to think beyond the 'mental fencing' to make my farm more profitable.

That phrase really resonated with me. I decided instead to put together some articles outside of what we might expect. I have found some I think could help each of us find new opportunities or, at the very least, give us something new to think about other than the usual seasonal decline in milk production. The topic: Developing your business and growing your revenue stream.

When I began working on my business plan, I found three very useful articles: an article from *On Pasture*, an article from Farm Service Agency and an article from *AgWeb*. Read on to learn key findings from these three industry articles.

- In the *On Pasture* article, writer Sandra Kay Miller suggests three questions each of us should ask when looking to maximize profits from a small-ruminant herd. If you answer all three questions thoroughly, you should be able to see all the possibilities for increasing your revenue stream.

- At first glance, the Farm Service Agency article about a new program for forage-CRP might not look like it would benefit a Midwestern dairy. Give it another look, and maybe it would. Remember, we're thinking outside the fence, here. It's worth a visit to your local NCRS/FSA office to see whether you qualify for this program or others.
- This last article, a piece from *AgWeb*, also resonated with me, and I feel many of you could find value in it. After all, what's more "unconventional" than working in a niche of the dairy industry? In my opinion, this *AgWeb* article on unconventional business plans makes a lot of sense on several levels.

Quick tips for creating a business plan:

Make it fluid: According to the author, the general rule of thumb is that brand new businesses need to write business plans. Unfortunately, most of those fail in part because they followed their plans. To be successful, the business plan must be a fluid document – easy to understand and easy to update as the business grows.

Make it easy to understand: What I liked about the idea in this article is that the finished plan isn't supposed to be 'academic' or require the reader to have an MBA to understand it. Anyone reading it should have a pretty good idea of how to run your business. They might not know exactly how to put the milking equipment together or how to calculate feed rations, but they should have an overall understanding of how your operation works and what your priorities are.

Share it with your team: Obviously a business plan is a great tool to put in front of a loan officer, but this type of plan has other benefits. In the event of illness or an accident, this could help someone stepping in feel more comfortable with what's happening on your farm and how to keep things moving forward.

Keep it simple and include team input: The thing I like best is that it only took me a few hours to write mine. I simply followed the suggested headings one after another. I then sent my plan to a family member who has never been on the farm and asked her to review it. Her questions are likely to be similar to those asked by a loan officer. Therefore, her input helped me draft a more complete plan.

Now that my business plan is finished, I would like to get into the habit of using it as a reference for my dairy sheep business. I can look at my business goals a few times a year to measure my progress and keep adjusting the plan to always move my flock forward.

Business planning tips: Three articles to read

- "Squeezing Every Drop of Profit from Your Small Ruminant Herd": <http://bit.ly/1g1snK4>
- "USDA announces conservation incentives for working grass, range and pasture lands": <http://bit.ly/1MSP29t>
Application period opens Sept. 1 and will be ongoing with selection periods scheduled at least once per year
- "Legacy Project's Unconventional Business Plan": <http://bit.ly/1OVSMER>

From Your Farms

One of the great aspects of being a DSANA member is the opportunity to learn from the experiences of other members. This willingness to share helps move the dairy sheep industry forward by supporting individual farms and businesses.

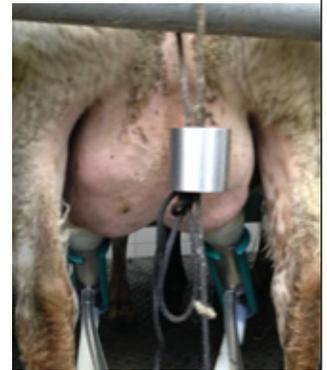
The "From your Farms" section is an opportunity for members to share their experiences and photos from their farms. Our goal is to create a library of tips and success stories to inspire all. Please help us reach that goal by contributing photos to the newsletter. Feel free to send photos that are in any way related to dairy sheep – an idea you implemented, a photo you're proud of or a snapshot of your flock.

Please send photos from your farm to Terry Felda at cewritf@gmail.com for a chance to be featured in the next DSANA newsletter.

Lynn Swanson of *Glendale Shepard* in Clinton, Washington has found an efficient and stable way to adjust milkers to adapt to ewe's udder heights.

She writes:

"There are two holes in the weights. Starting at the cluster, we attach the cord to a carabineer (hook). The cord goes up through the middle hole of the weight, over the butt bar and back down through the side hole of the weight. Then the cord is knotted at the bottom of the weight. You have to experiment with where to tie the knot. Then you can just lift or lower the weight for each individual sheep, depending on whether she has high or low teats. The cords and weights just stay attached to the butt bar, and the clusters are attached using the hook at each milking."



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